

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Finding of No Significant Impact  
DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2015-0021-EA  
May, 2016**

**Lincoln County Partners Non-Motorized, Multipurpose Trails**

**Lincoln County, NV**

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**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
CALIENTE FIELD OFFICE**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment (EA) Lincoln County Partners Non-Motorized, Multipurpose Trails DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2015-0021-EA. After consideration of the environmental effects as described in the EA, I have determined that the proposed action with the project design specifications, including minimization or mitigation measures identified in the EA will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared.

This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

**CONTEXT**

The BLM is proposing to construct, operate, and maintain up to 27 miles of non-motorized, multiuse singletrack trail and up to two trailheads on the public lands around Caliente, Nevada. This project would also include the improvement and maintenance of three shallow water crossings along Clover Creek. Permits from the Army Corps of Engineers would be required prior to developing any improvements along Clover Creek.

Planning for this project began in 2012 when the BLM began soliciting ideas from the public regarding potential trail development within the Caliente Field Office district. The BLM hosted several open house meetings before moving forward with the plan to develop mountain biking and hiking singletrack trails just south and southeast of the City of Caliente.

The area in which trail development would occur is the result of consultation with the professional trail association, the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA). Under IMBA's guidance, the trails have been designed to connect users to BLM managed public lands and Nevada Division of State Parks lands by way of a trail network totaling 40 miles in length. The location of the proposed trails would provide mountain bikers and hikers access to terrain unique to eastern Nevada.

The single-track sections of the trail have been designed to contour hillsides at an average grade of less than 10%, the grade never exceeds 15%. International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) design standards recommend the average trail grade of 10% or less is most sustainable. Constructed single-track trail will be a full bench design with a tread width of 18-24 inches, outslope at 3-5% and have constant rolling grade dips and knicks. This design assists with shedding of water from the trail tread. These trail construction standards allow water to sheet flow perpendicular across the trail tread reducing the chance of soil erosion.

Use within the project area primarily consists of dispersed recreation opportunities like hunting, trapping, camping, and backcountry equestrian riding. Off-road vehicle use on designated routes is permitted. The project area is within two active grazing allotments; the trails do not cross any fences, gates, or cattle guards. There are currently no trails designated for non-motorized use within the project area.

This project is part of a partnership effort between the BLM, City of Caliente, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners, and Nevada Division of State Parks to expand the opportunities for non-motorized recreation and non-motorized recreation tourism in Lincoln County. The proposed action addresses the recreation and land management objectives of the Lincoln County Public Lands Policy Plan 2010, Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, and the 2008 Ely District Resource Management Plan.

## **INTENSITY**

### ***1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.***

The Environmental Assessment has analyzed and disclosed both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action and subsequent connected actions. Beneficial impacts include enhanced opportunities for non-motorized recreation, economic growth associated with non-motorized recreation tourism, and connectivity between the public and State Park lands outside of Caliente. Adverse impacts from the proposed action include linear vegetation and soil disturbance associated with trail construction and minor disturbances to wildlife. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant.

### ***2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.***

The proposed action does not significantly affect public health and safety either adversely or in a beneficial manner. Mountain biking and hiking are activities that have a certain amount of risk associated with them, and subsequent use of the trails may result in personal injury if the proper safety precautions are not followed by individual users. The trails will be monitored and maintained by the BLM in order to ensure safe trail conditions, and users will be educated on the other land uses occurring within the area. Therefore, the risks associated with trail use are expected to be minimal.

### ***3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.***

Stipulations are described in the EA that are designed to protect these resources during trail and trailhead construction. The anticipated impacts to nearby ecologically sensitive areas are anticipated to be minimal.

Greater sage-grouse habitat would be disturbed by the proposed trail system and trailhead facilities as described in the EA, and may require compensatory mitigation for General Habitat

Management Area habitat loss as a net conservation gain. Required Design Features would be required to mitigate Other Habitat Management Area disturbance. However, as there are currently no greater sage-grouse occurring in the project area, greater sage-grouse would not be directly impacted by the proposed action.

The proposed trails are bordered to the west by Meadow Valley Wash through Rainbow Canyon, and to the north by Clover Creek which are within the Lower Meadow Valley Wash Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The trails do not cross into the ACEC boundaries. Therefore, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact to this area.

The trails on public lands have been designed to connect to proposed trails within Kershaw-Ryan State Park (Kershaw-Ryan), approximately three miles south of Caliente. Kershaw-Ryan will be constructing and maintaining similar non-motorized singletrack trails in a separate but connected action to the proposed action. Cultural resources have been avoided by rerouting the proposed trail corridor around sites identified by the staff Archaeologist.

There are no prime farmlands, wetlands, or wild and scenic rivers within the project area.

***4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.***

It is not anticipated that the proposed action will have a highly controversial effect on the quality of the human environment. Public opinion has been considered and incorporated into the trail planning process from the beginning, and measures are in place to ensure there is no change to current recreational or grazing uses within the project area. This project has received a high degree of support from the community and all involved partners.

***5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.***

Due to the current uses within the project area and the minimal landscape impact associated with trail development, it is highly unlikely that any uncertain, unique, or unknown risks exist.

***6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.***

Completion of the EA does not establish a precedent for other trail development projects. Any future trail development projects in surrounding areas will be analyzed on their own merits and implemented, or not, independent of the actions currently selected.

***7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.***

Caliente and Lincoln County may see economic benefits resulting from increased non-motorized tourism to the area which may have a synergistic effect associated with the business earned from off-road races currently held in the area. However, past, present and reasonably foreseeable

future actions have been considered in the cumulative impacts analysis within the EA. It is not anticipated that any cumulatively significant impacts will result from the proposed action.

***8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.***

The proposed trail routes were surveyed for scientific, cultural, and historic resources and rerouted where necessary to avoid impacts to these resources. There would be no adverse impacts to sites eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

***9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.***

It is not anticipated that the proposed trail system would have any population-level impacts to sensitive wildlife species given that the ground and vegetation disturbance is limited to a maximum three-foot wide tread over a maximum 40 miles of trails. A portion of the trails skirt a small patch (<0.2 acres) of willows that was determined to be unsuitable habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher (flycatcher) due to lacking characteristics in patch-size and complexity. Protection measures preventing disturbance to breeding flycatchers are described in the EA. However, because the patch is not suitable habitat for flycatchers, no adverse impacts to threatened or endangered species are anticipated.

***10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.***

This action is consistent with federal, state, local, and tribal laws and other requirements for the protection of the environment. All agencies were properly notified of the proposed action and given appropriate comment time to respond.



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6-2-16

Date